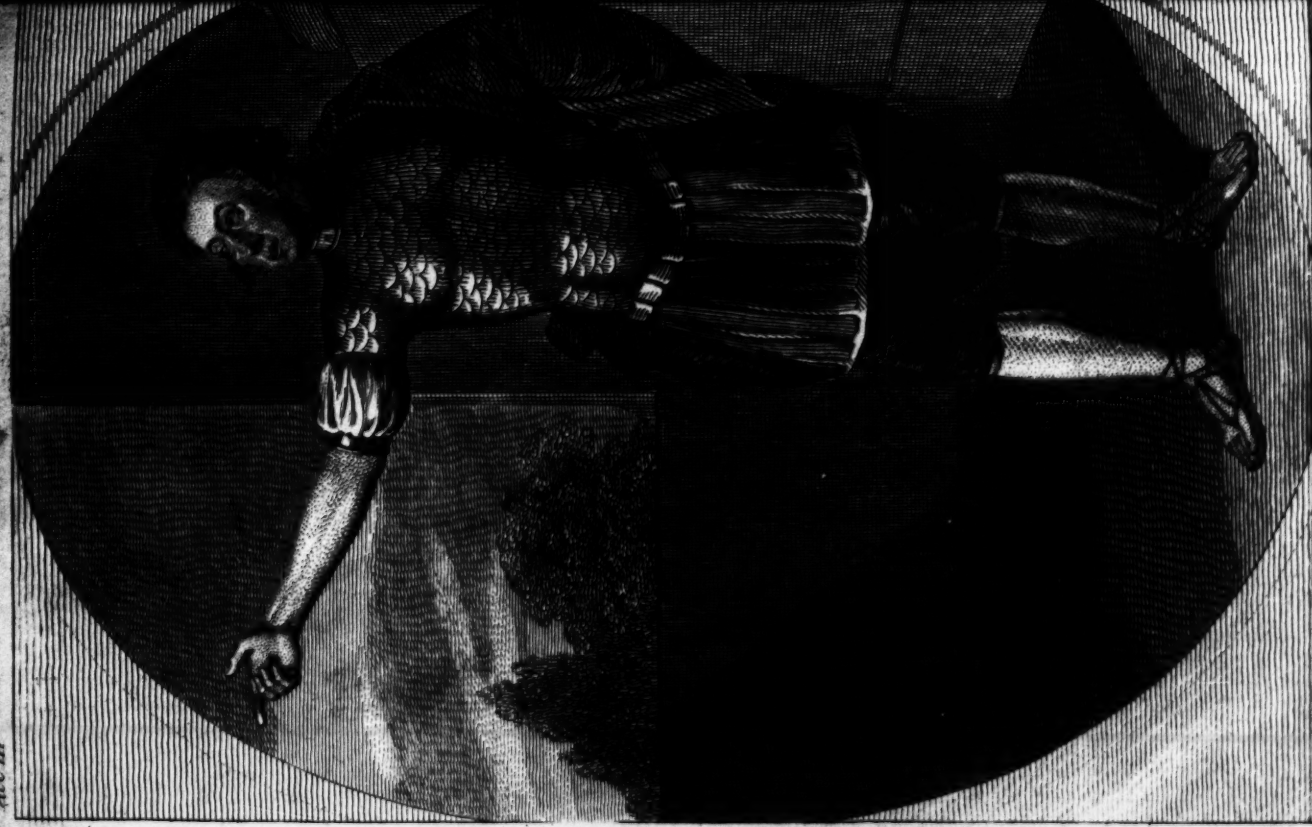


*De melle pout*

*Audre*

*M. LEWIS as PHARNACES.*

Phar. Oh! thou most unkind.



*De modo pueri*

*Andro*

*M. LEWIS as PHARNACES.*

Phar. Oh! thou most unkind.



CLEOMICE,  
PRINCESS OF BITHYNIA.

---

TRAGEDY,

BY JOHN HOOLE, ESQ.

---

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-RÖYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

---

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

*By Permission of the Manager.*

---

The Lines distinguished by Inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

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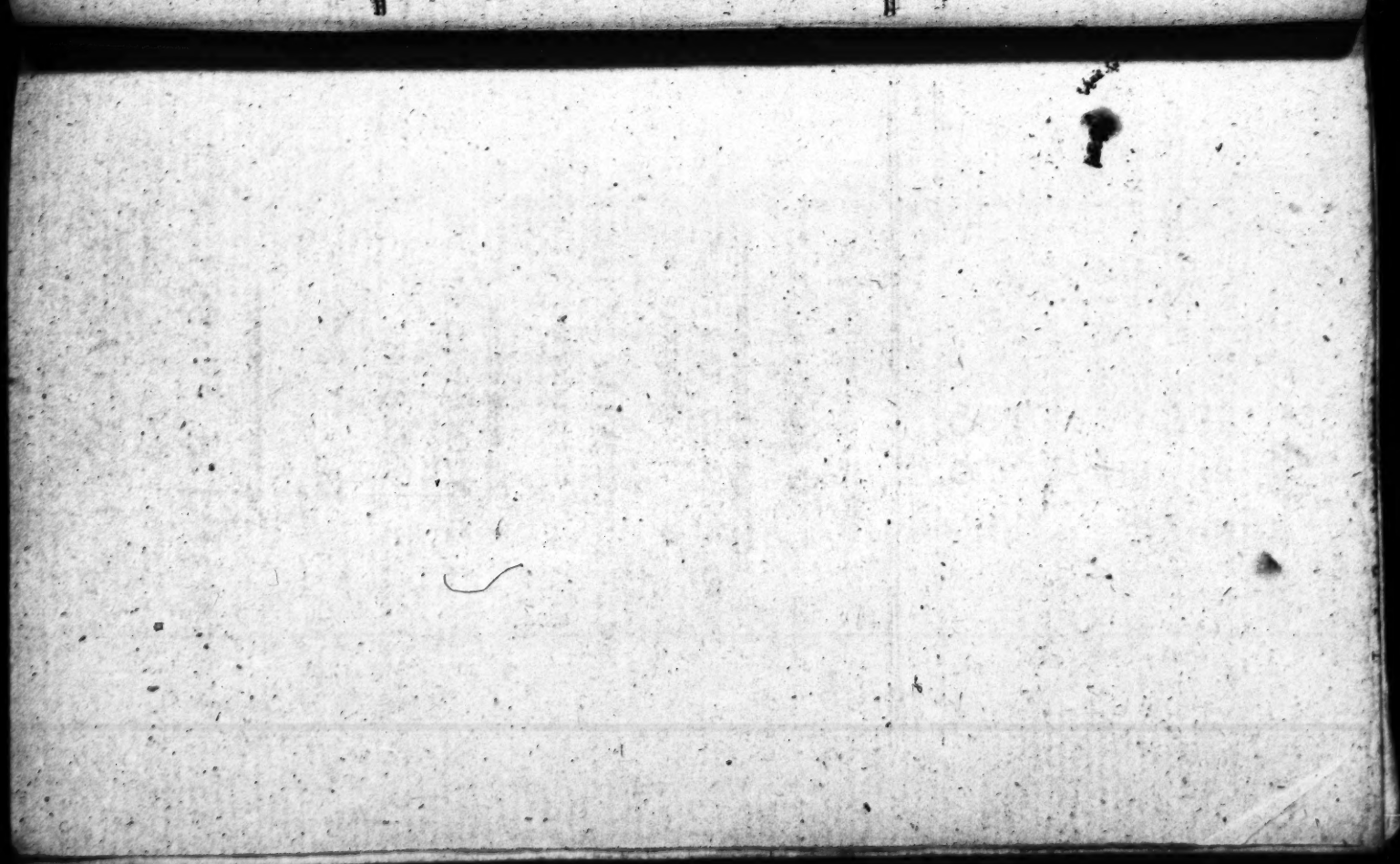
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JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,  
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MDCCLXCV.



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TO

*MRS. VERELST,*

AS A

SINCERE MARK OF RESPECT,

THIS TRAGEDY

IS

DEDICATED,

BY HER MOST OBEEDIENT,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

---

---

## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

*THE Author will not here trouble the Public with a detail of the difficulties through which this Tragedy of Cleonice has struggled to make its appearance. He cannot, however, suppress his singular obligations to Mrs. Hartley, who most readily undertook the part of Cleonice, which she has continued to support, with unremitting assiduity and friendly elacricity, amidst the repeated attacks of severe indisposition.*

---

Shire-Lane,  
11th March, 1775.

---



---

## PROLOGUE.

---

Written by T. VAUGHAN, Esq.---Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

---

TELL me, ye gods, ye arbiters of wit,  
Who rule the heav'ns, or who lead the pit,

[Addressing the gallery and pit.

Whence comes it, in an age refin'd by taste,  
By science polish'd, and by judgment chaste,  
We see the muse, in dignity sublime,  
Led on by prologue, ape-ing pantomime?  
Whose sportive fancy, and whose comic skill,  
All must applaud—where Roscius guides the quill;  
Yet when Melpomene in grief appears,

Her suffering virtue bath'd in sorrow's tears,  
From tyrant latus, or jealous love oppress'd,  
Swelling with silence in her tortur'd breast,  
How can the heart her genial impulse shew,  
Feel as she feels, or weep another's woe;

When gay Thalia has so late possess'd  
The laughing transports of the human breast?  
Let each her province keep, let jocund mirth  
To Epilogue alone give happy birth;  
Ease the struck soul from ev'ry anxious fear,  
And wipe from beauty's cheek the silent tear.

Twice Metastasio's wings have borne our bays,  
And safely brought him o'er the critic seas;

A iij



*Fir'd quib success, he dures this awful night,  
Cheer'd by your smiles to take a bolder flight;  
Nor longer stoop beneath a foreign shade,  
Like Dian shining from a borrow'd aid;  
But comes impregnate with Icarian pride,  
To stretch his pinions, and forsake his guide;  
Yet doubtful flies, lest vapours damp his force,  
And one black cloud should stop his airy course,  
To awful heights his proud ambition soars,  
And the dread regions of applause explores;  
No sun be fears—but courts its warmest ray,  
'Tis yours to raise—or sink him in the sea.*

*Let Candour then proceed to try the cause,  
That Magna Charta of dramatic laws!*



---

## PROLOGUE.

---

written by a Friend, to have been spoken in the character of the Tragic Muse.

---

Designed for MRS. BARRY.

---

*JUDGES of genius ! from whose bands a bard  
This night awaits the laurel of reward !  
To you, the Tragic Muse, in Britain's name,  
Comes to announce the merits of his claim.  
'Tis I have led him timorous to this field,  
And bade him dare his country's gauntlet wield ;  
Bade him aspire to vault her fiery breed,  
Nor humbly stoop to mount the manag'd steed.  
Long had I seen his patient merit toil,  
In culling chaplets from a foreign soil ;  
Whilst, here, transplanted by his skilful hand,  
Italia's honours bloom'd in Albion's land.  
Long had I mark'd, as such exotic boughs  
Content he wove to veil his modest brows,  
A spirit that in paths untrod before  
Might snatch the nobler foliage of this shore.  
Pleas'd with the hopes, that I had now deserv'd  
A future son, from whom the bushin's pride  
To this my favourite isle, again might rise ;  
I touch'd his ear, and pointed out the prize.---*

'Wither my honours in this clime (I said)  
'Buds here no bounteous leaf to deck thy head ?

' Are these once fostering skies so over-cast,  
 ' That genius dares not brave th' inclement blast?  
 ' Come, let me lead thee, where my sons of yore  
 ' In fancy's fields amass'd their laureate store:  
 ' With active powers, aloft, bestrode the clouds  
 ' Inspir'd by kind acclaims of shouting crowds.  
 ' Turn thee, where Shakspeare warr'd the mystic rod,  
 ' And saw a new creation wait his nod.  
 ' Behold where terror, with eccentric stride,  
 ' Bursts, like a torrent from the mountain's side!  
 ' Behold where gentle pity beaves the sigh,  
 ' Sluicing the fruitful conduit of the eye!  
 ' See love, at whose approach, the airy wiles  
 ' Of mirth and freedom, or the jocund smiles  
 ' Of sweet content, dispers'd in wild affright,  
 ' Mount on their silken wings and take their flight.  
 ' See jealousy his hideous form uprear,  
 ' Tine the quick brand, and shake the vengeful spear:  
 ' While, close behind, fell anguish and disdain  
 ' Stalk sullen by, and swell his gloomy train.  
 ' Mark where despair points to some distant ground,  
 ' On blasted yew, where night-birds shriek around,  
 ' Where yawning tombs add horror to the night,  
 ' And meteor's flash their momentary light.  
 ' Here mark thyself, what various objects rise,  
 ' Nor trust the medium of another's eyes.'

I spoke—and genius strait began to spread  
 His ready plumage, and my voice obey'd,  
 Adventurous, thence, he dares this night aspire  
 To stamp the vivid scene with native fire.

'Tis yours, ye Britons, then, with kind applause,  
To fan the flame I kindled in your cause :  
Nor be it said, when on your mercy thrown,  
You foster every spark, but what's your own.  
From your dread sentence, crown'd with laurels won,  
I ardently expect to greet a son :  
The palm I have deposited with you,  
And trust your hearts to give it where 't is due.

---

---

*Dramatis Personæ.*

---

---

COVENT GARDEN.

<i>Men.</i>	
ARTABASUS, King of Pontus,	- Mr. Barry.
PHARNACES, his son, under the name of Arsetès,	- Mr. Lewis.
LYCOMEDES, King of Bithynia.	- Mr. Bensley.
ORONTES, Prince of the blood of Bithy- nia,	- Mr. Lee.
TERAMENES, General of Bithynia,	- Mr. Hull.
AGENOR, Friend to Orontes,	- Mr. Whitefield.
ZOPYRUS, Friend to Orontes,	- Mr. L'Estrange.
Officer,	- Mr. Thompson.
<i>Women.</i>	
CLEONICE, daughter to Lycomedes,	- Mrs. Hartley.
ARSINOË, daughter to Teramenes,	- Mrs. Morton.

Guards, Attendants, &c.

---

---

SCENE, a city on the frontiers of Bithynia, and the country adjacent.

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## CLEONICE.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

---

*A Gallery.—Enter TERAMENES, AGENOR.*

*Teramenes.*

AGENOR, still Bithynia must retain  
The sword unsheath'd, and still remov'd afar;  
Shall peace, in vain desir'd, mock every hope  
Of dear domestic happiness—the leagues  
Of factious princes, whose associate force  
His vex'd this bleeding land, now yield indeed  
To Lycomedes' arms, or rather shrink  
Before the genius of your noble friend.

*Age.* Arsetes, bred in distant realms, and long  
A wanderer o'er the face of earth, must hail  
The hour that led his steps to tread your soil,  
And gave him Teramenes for his friend.

*Tera.* Though now the rage of civil strife is past,  
Full well thou know'st, to-morrow's sun declin'd,  
His next returning beam lights up the day

That ends the truce with Pontus, and demands  
Our strongest force to meet a mightier foe,  
In Artabasis.

*Age.* Five returning suns

Have chang'd your vernal groves, since as the breath  
Of Fame declares, your armies met and fought  
On Hippias' banks; what time your martial powers  
(Forgive me, if report mislead my tongue)  
Bow'd to a foreign standard.

*Tera.* Lycomedes,

Whose thirst of glory in his vigorous life  
Compell'd the neighbouring states to bend beneath  
Bithynia's yoke; when creeping time had clogg'd  
The vital springs, and kept his age-from scenes  
Of active valour, by his generals still  
Maintain'd the field, and through the nations spread  
His martial terrors, till that fatal day,  
When Hippias, down his current, dy'd with blood,  
The frequent corse and glittering ensign bore:  
Then, midst the slaughter, fell a sacrifice  
To iron war, our king's lamented son;  
A youth, the early darling of his sire,  
The soldier's hope, and nursling of the field.

*Age.* Oft have I heard Polemon's name, who  
brave

Unpractis'd arm encounter'd Artabasis,  
And from his sword received a glorious death.

*Tera.* But though the time's necessity compell'd  
Bithynia to the truce, still, still the thought  
Of his Polemon rankled in the bosom



Of our afflicted monarch, still the hope,  
Though distant hope of vengeance, glow'd within,  
And fed eternal hatred in his soul.

While now to Pontus' bounds, his army spreads  
It's conquering legions, he forgoes the state  
Of Nicomédias' palace, to reside

Amidst this city, whose opposing bulwarks  
Rise on the kingdom's edge, and dare the foe.

*Age.* Fame speaks your rival great, and gives the  
praise,

Of might and wisdom to the king of Pontus ;  
And more, 'tis said, his son, amidst the files  
Of Rome's immortal legions, distant far  
From Pontus, learns the rugged trade of war,  
And gathers laurels in his blooming age,  
That veterans view with envy : his return  
Gives earnest of new triumphs.

*Tera.* Let him come ;  
Would yet Arsetes aid Bithynia's cause,  
His sword, with brave Orontes join'd, whose hand  
Must sway th' scepter of Bithynia's realm,  
Might fix th' unsteady wing of victory '  
To Lycomedes' bands.

*Age.* Orontes' valour  
Your sovereign deems to merit Cleonice,  
Whose piety forsakes the pomp of courts,  
The splendid ease of female life, to attend  
A father's steps, amidst the clang of war.  
But for Arsetes, thou rememberest well,  
When first he join'd to thine his social arms,

He pledg'd his faith for five returning moons  
To abide your welcome guest; and now the tenth  
Wanes in her silver orb.

*Tera.* What says Agenor?

My mind, though loth, recalls each circumstance.  
But still I hop'd Arsetes might be won  
To breathe our friendly air, still mix'd among  
Bithynia's warlike sons, now hov'ring o'er  
The verge of hostile Pontus, when the time  
And place concurr'd; to pour with sudden inroad  
The storm of conquest on our hated foe,  
To avenge a form, a worth so like his own——  
——But see, he comes——

*Enter ARSETES.*

Belov'd Arsetes, welcome!

Youth, at thy presence, buds with bloom renew'd,  
Such as I was, when, on Arabia's sands,  
I crush'd the wandering robbers of the desert.

*Arse.* My lord, too partial friendship ever finds  
New praise for your Arsetes; if I claim  
Of merit aught, here Heaven receive my thanks,  
That bade me wield the sword for Lycomedes.

*Tera.* And yet Arsetes now methinks forgets  
To prize our country's honours; while the bond  
Of friendship holds no more his changing heart;  
That heart, which once I press'd with transport here,  
Which seem'd with mutual transport to receive  
The love I proffer'd, when my bosom glow'd  
With warmth of gratitude to him, whose arm

snatch'd Teramenes from impending death,  
 As fierce Lysippus aim'd the threatening blade  
 At my defenceless-head, when you rush'd in,  
 (Till then unknown) and sav'd me from the foe.

*Arse.* 'T was sure some happy star, that led my steps  
 At that blest moment—if I sav'd the life  
 of Teramenes, I preserv'd indeed

A faithful counsellor for Lycomedes,  
 An army's chief, but for myself a friend.

*Tera.* And wilt thou, my Arsetes, now forsake  
 The bands, that late pursued the glorious task  
 Of conquest, taught by thee—now when the great,  
 Th' important moment comes, on which depends  
 Our monarch's fame, our vengeance—led by thee  
 And brave Orontes, we have stemm'd the tide  
 Of inbred tumult : every rebel head  
 Now lies subdued, and flush'd with great success,  
 Our soldiers now demand, with loud acclaim,  
 To pour their fury o'er yon hostile bounds,  
 Beneath Arsetes and Orontes.

*Arse.* Heaven

Be witness here, compulsive honour long

Has challeng'd my departure—yet, till now,

I wav'd obedience to the frequent calls

Of duty ; but the flame of civil broils

At length subsiding through your troubled state,

I must (forgive me, chief, forgive me, friend)

Yield to the powerful voice, and quit Bithynia.

By every toil my sword has known in battle,

But most the toils I shar'd with Teramenes,

Bij

Unwilling and compell'd, I leave your clime,  
And quit a country dearer than my own.

*Tera.* Farewell, Arsetes; think that Teramenes,  
Feels from his inmost soul the fix'd resolve  
Of him, whom once he fondly deem'd by fortune,  
From all mankind selected for his friend.

I'll seek the king, no less will he regret  
Arsetes' loss, whose presence might insure

His wish'd revenge, and fix his kingdom's glory. [*Exit.*]

*Age.* Why droops Arsetes? O! discover all  
Thy secret grief, and let Agenor share it.

*Arse.* Indeed thou dost—my every thought is thine  
My ether self, my bosom's counsellor!

What needs there more to rend my heart, to fill  
My tortur'd soul, while loitering here I wrong

My native soil, the voice of filial duty

Chides my delay, yet love, the powerful god

Reigns in my breast, and mocks each settled purpose:

Come, my Agenor, with thy friendly aid

Confirm my thoughts, and teach me yet to tread,

Yet to resume the path my feet have left;

To quit the land where all my joys are center'd,

To tear myself from love and Cleopice—

—O! never!—never—

*Age.* Yet again reflect,

Think what you are, to what has Heaven reserv'd

Your virtues—Shall a kingdom's heir—

*Arse.* Go on—

'T is honest chiding—Shall a kingdom's heir,

(Thus would'st thou say) on whom th' expecting eyes



of thousands look for happiness, on whom  
A father fixes every dearest hope  
To see himself renew'd to distant times,  
Shall he, forgetting all the claims of glory,  
Forgetting all the ties of filial duty,  
Defrauds his longing people of their prince,  
And from his sire with-hold a darling son?  
Say—shall Bithynia's hostile lands detain,  
From Artabasus' sight his lov'd Pharnaces?  
O! no—Agenor—thou has fir'd my soul!  
My father!—yes, I will embrace the knees  
Of him, whose love reproaches my delay.  
Yet never, Cleonice, shall this breast  
Forget its wonted flame:—Is it a crime  
To adore the sum of all her sex's graces,  
Though wayward chance has plac'd the hopeless bar  
Of lineal enmity between our loves?

*Age.* And yet, my prince; the indulgent hand of  
fate,

Perchance may weave your future web of life  
With threads of brighter dye; even love itself  
May find a way to clear the gloomy prospect:  
Discord perhaps may once again extinguish  
Her hated torch that fires the rival nations,  
And Cleonice be the bond of peace:  
Too long, already, strangers have we lived,  
Alien from friends and home: though Artabasus  
Sent you beneath my father's guardian care,  
To learn hard lessons in the school of glory,  
Yet sure the parent suffer'd in that absence,

B iij

Which, as a king, his virtue deem'd would raise  
Your fame, and fit you for a people's weal.

*Arise.* Yes, my Agenor, oft his tenderest greetings  
Have warn'd me to return, when circling time  
Had brought the period fix'd for my departure;  
Or when the pause of arms, or honour's duty  
Permitted me to quit the host of Rome.

*Age.* And yet—my prince—

*Arise.* And yet—too true, Agenor,

I feel each just reproach—the land indeed  
I left, and journey'd o'er a length of soil,  
When fate (for sure 't was more than common fortune)  
Prompted my steps to tread Bithynia's realm,  
Where Lycomedes wag'd intestine war  
With rebel arms.

*Age.* Thy generous valour then,

Warm'd by the common cause of kings, to assert  
A prince's rights, forgot thy country's foe.

*Arise.* Full well thou know'st I vow'd to every God,  
By all the solemn ties that bind mankind,  
Ne'er to reveal, while in this hostile land  
My country, or my birth; this urg'd by thee,  
I swore, when first I told thee my design,  
To gaze on Cleonice's wondrous charms.

*Age.* Nor vain the caution—think, O think, how far  
It yet imports to keep the mighty secret:  
Alas! my friend I tremble, had your father  
Been conscious whether fortune led the steps  
Of his Pharnaces; could he know the land  
Of Lycomedes now detains his son—



Th' idea starts a thousand fears: should now  
Some dreadful chance betray you to the foe;  
I shudder at the thought—then let us hence,  
And to the longing troops of Pontus give  
A blooming hero, promis'd oft in vain:  
Then let us hasten---by my father's shade  
I now adjure you---for Pharnaces once  
Rever'd his Tiridates-----

*Arise.* Witness, Heaven,

How dear I held him!--Artabasus only  
Could claim a nearer duty o'er my heart,  
The guide, the great example of my youth!  
Methinks I now recall the fatal day  
That snatch'd him from us--O, my lov'd Agenor!  
The scene is present to my eyes-----I see  
The battle rang'd, when to my ardent gaze  
His hand experienc'd pointed out the files  
Of rigid war, and taught me where to drive  
The thunder of the field; when Heaven so will'd,  
A distant arrow sent with deadly aim,  
Pierc'd his brave breast-----

*Age.* Then midst the distant fight,  
It was not given Agenor's hand to close,  
A dying parent's eyes-----

*Arise.* These arms receiv'd  
The venerable chief--'Take, take,' (he cry'd)  
'This last embrace--still let the dear remembrance  
'Of Tiridates' counsels move his prince,  
'And, for my sake, be kind to my Agenor.'-----  
He could no more, but left in thee his pledge

Of truth and amity—since which my soul  
Has held thee ever partner of her fame,  
Her better half, her other Tiridates! [*Embrace.*]

*Age.* I am indeed thy Tiridates—yes,  
My father, from thy seats of bliss and peace,  
See, how thy prince rewards thy loyal faith,  
And, in his love, supplies a parent's loss—  
And yet, forgive me, prince, thy words awake  
Remembrance of that day for ever mourn'd!—  
— My father—

*Arse.* Go, Agenor, since my last  
Resolves are fix'd—provide what'er requires  
To quit this court—to quit my Cleonice,  
Though death is in the thought!—thy piety  
Reproaches mine—ere yet the mounting sun  
Whose early ray now gilds the face of morn,  
Attain his mid-day seat, the camp of Pontus  
Shall see Pharnaces and Agenor. [*Exit* Agenor.]

*Arse.* [*Alone.*] Yet

Be still, my beating heart—O, Cleonice!  
I feel her now—Instruct me every God  
In soothing speech!—O, teach my lips to breathe  
In gentle sounds, the fatal word—farewell!

—Orontes here!—and is not this the blest,  
The destin'd husband of my Cleonice—  
I shall relapse—for if I think—distraction  
Ensues, and fame and peace are lost for ever! [*Exit.*]

*Enter* ORONTES.

*Oro.* Sure 't was Arsetes! that malignant planet,

That thwart; my course, when'er my fiery soul  
 Would, eagle-wing'd, stretch her aspiring flight,  
 He soars above me still—Have I not worn  
 The mask of loyal faith, smooth'd o'er the dark  
 The sullen brow of deep design, with smiles  
 My heart confess'd not?—What have I not done,  
 For thee Ambition!—Let not pale Remembrance  
 Review the past, or paint a scene to stagger  
 The sickly resolution—deeds long done,  
 That sleep secure from every mortal ken,  
 Are but as shadows in the coward eye  
 Of conscience—Hence!—Orontes' soul disdains  
 The phantoms of remorse.——

*Enter ZOPYRUS.*

Now, my Zopyrus——

speak; hast thou aught that claims my ear?

*Zop.* I learn

That the young stranger who so deeply witch'd  
 The madding multitude, prepares this day  
 To leave Bithynia's court.

*Oro.* It cannot be——

Arsetes!——speak—what at this fated time,  
 When war again unfolds his brazen portals,  
 And Pontus brings to view its crested thousands;  
 A tempting prospect yet untry'd, to prove  
 His sword——It cannot be!

*Zop.* This hour Agenor  
 Declar'd Arsetes's purpose.

*Oro.* Speed it, gods!

Come near, Zopyrus, to thy faithful ear

I've oft disclos'd the secrets of my heart,  
Where Love, but most Ambition holds his sway.

This stranger is my bane—I shrink beneath

His better genius—even the field that once

Crown'd this good sword with honours, yields me now

But wither'd laurels, which his brow disdains;

While the blind herd on him, with full-mouth'd  
clamour,

Lavish their shouts.

*Zop.* Yet fortune has secur'd

Your brightest hopes—has not our king declar'd

Orontes, next by birth, ascends the throne?

Have not the assembled states confirm'd the right

Of just succession? hastening on the steep

Of downward life, our king, though high in spirit,

Blazing with wasting light, that soon must fail,

Shall sudden sink to night, and leave to thee

A glorious rising to imperial greatness!

Fair Cleonice too shall bless your bed,

And with her beauty smooth the toils of empire.

*Orø.* 'Tis true, the charms of Cleonice well

Might claim the tongue of rapture—yet Zopyrus,

While great Ambition's sun lights up my flame,

The star of Love looks sickly at his beams.

*Zop.* What more can crown your wish, when Happiness,

In all your soul aspires to, soon shall open

Her welcome arms—Mean-time the king, my lord,

Esteems, and holds you high above the rank

Of Nicomedia's nobles.



*Oro.* True, Zopyrus;

Spite of the tardy warmth of cautious age  
I've work'd me deep in Lycomedes' soul,

By more than common zeal to avenge his son.

But home-bred faction, spreading through the land,

Compell'd us to the hated truce with Pontus:

Till now, nine moons elaps'd, this upstart chief  
Slept in, to bear away the prize of arms

Due to my elder sword, while Teramenes

With partial eye beheld his every deed,

And idoliz'd the work himself had rais'd.

*Zop.* Yet common rumour speaks that friendship  
holds

In strongest bands Orontes and Arsetes.

*Oro.* Even so, my friend—and policy demands  
That he who runs the mingled race of life,  
Should learn to veil himself, and oft appear  
The thing he is not—

*Zop.* Should propitious fortune  
Remove your rival hence—

*Oro.* If this report

Be true, the dark eclipse that late has frown'd,

No more, my friend, shall intercept my fame;

The war's great field, at this auspicious time

Begun, shall not enrich a stranger's hand,

But fall the harvest of Orontes' sword. [Exit.

# ACT II. SCENE I.

*A Garden, with Palm-trees, Olives, and other Eastern Plants. Enter CLEONICE.*

*Cleonice.*

ALAS! it will not be! and fond remembrance  
In vain recalls the past——where, where is now  
That reason's boast, which o'er creation lifts  
The pride of man, when fickle as the gale  
That sweeps the blossom from the bough, our passion  
Veer with each hour, and shake our best resolves?  
How is my bosom chang'd!—no longer now,  
From my example, mother's teach the young  
And tender maid, who dreads each swelling wave  
That heaves but gently o'er the stream of life,  
To rise superior to her sex's weakness!——

*Enter ARSINOE.*

*Arsi.* Friend of my life, whose partial choice has  
given

Arsinoe long the privilege to pass  
The ceremonious bounds, which birth and title  
Had plac'd between us, wherefore art thou chang'd  
From her that lov'd, and lov'd but her Arsinoe?

*Cleo.* Still art thou here the partner of my heart:  
Then wherefore this reproach? and why complain  
Of change that never yet this breast has known?



We were two plants that grew in friendship's soil,  
And promis'd fruits of never-dying love.

*Art.* Then every care that Cleonice knew  
Arsinoe too has shar'd—but late I've mark'd  
That Cleonice, different from herself,  
Shuns even Arsinoe's presence, ever seeks  
The lone recess, and brooding o'er her thoughts,  
Nurses some hidden grief—soon war again  
Shall loose its rage—perhaps the threatening danger  
Alarms your fear.

*Cleo.* Thou know'st that I alone  
Remain'd the comfort of a father's age,  
When fate, that tore Polemon from the hope  
Of his Bithynia, from a husband's arms  
A hapless consort sever'd, thou remember'st,  
My mother, sad Arete, bow'd with grief,  
Soon mix'd her ashes with the son's she mourn'd:  
Then, left in early youth, my converse oft  
Sooth'd a fond parent's pangs, when recollection  
Rais'd up the form of blessings lost for ever!

While, as I grew, paternal fondness saw  
With partial eye his Cleonice's mind  
Expand beyond her sex: hence not alone,  
The soft, the winning talents, that to life  
Give female polish, but the greater arts  
Enobling man were taught my ripening age.  
But, o'er the rest, my sire, whose bosom glow'd  
To avenge his son, enur'd my thoughts to cherish  
Deep hatred of the foe by whom he fell.

*Art.* Hatred and vengeance ill agree, my friend,

'With tender grief like thine—estrang'd from all,  
Thy wonted temper, solitude bespeaks  
Far other change—Then seek not to deceive  
The searching eye of friendship.

*Cleo.* Alas! Arsinoe,

I feel the woman here——thou said'st but now  
That war again must soon unloose its rage:  
Is there no cause for fear? whate'er the tongue  
Of stoic fortitude may boast, the mind;  
The generous mind that owns life's dearest ties,  
Will nourish feelings pride disdains to own.

*Arsi.* Revolve our present state, our country's sword  
Now us'd to victory, gives high expectation  
Of future triumphs, while for you, my friend,  
If love, if grandeur charm, Bithynia's throne  
Shall raise you high, and Hymen light his torch  
At Cupid's flame——Is not the first of men,  
The first of heroes, yours? Yes, Cleonice,  
Each anxious doubt shall fleet like morning mist,  
And all be lost in your Orontes' arms.

*Cleo.* Orontes' arms!——O, Heaven! what have I  
said!

By every tie of love——But whither——whither  
Now rove my thoughts! Leave, leave me, my Arsinoe,  
To brood in secret o'er my treasur'd sorrows.

*Arsi.* Scarce from her tenth fair crescent has the  
moon

Silver'd night's fleecy robe, since I've beheld,  
Though silent, I've beheld thy altered mien;  
Methinks e'er since the day, when 'midst the ranks

The sword of violence, may now secure  
A nation's fame and vengeance---Yes, whate'er  
Arsetes' race or country, beauty's charms  
Insure his future service.---Fair Arsinoë,  
Thy virtuous friend, shall bind her native land  
In grateful thanks for such a hero's valour.  
Our friend, our Teramenes, joins to his  
Arsinoë's hand, and gives, in such a son,  
A great ally in Lycomedes' cause.

Led by Orontes' and Arsetes' valour,  
What may Bithynia's squadrons not atchieve?

*Cleo.* [*Aside.*] Support me, Heaven! [*To Ter.*]---  
sir, I confess the virtues

Of my Arsinoë, and her beauty's charms:  
Permit me yet to ask you, if Arsetes  
Has e'er reveal'd---Perhaps some distant fair,  
Whose love and beauty had possess'd his soul,  
Impels him to forsake Bithynia's court.

*Tera.* No, princess---if this judgment, not unskill'd  
In human kind, can read the thoughts of men,  
He loves Arsinoë: late have I observ'd  
His bosom labouring with the stifled passion,  
Of recent birth; and well I know my daughter  
Owns, with a virgin blush, Arsetes' virtues:  
Nor could a youth, whose fortune only rests  
In his own merits and his sword, refuse  
That hand which Nicomedia's noblest peers  
With transport would receive.

*Lyc.* Why droops my daughter?  
Still cherish hope; a train of better days

Succeeds, where vengeance brightens up the prospect,  
 My age's darling! 't is for thee my soul  
 Still labours, though declining years would fain  
 Woo me to shades of peace—to raise thee high,  
 With thy Qrontes, and avenge my boy,  
 I scorn repose—nor will I rest till these  
 Old eyes behold in chains or breathless stretch'd  
 The cruel foe by whom Polemon fell!  
 Come, Teramenes, let us seek Arsetes,  
 Then once again renew our vows to pour  
 The war's whole rage on Artabasus' head!

[*Exeunt Lyc. and Ter.*  
*Cleo. [Alone.]* It is enough—misfortune now has  
 spent

Her utmost shafts—and I defy the future!  
 O, Cleonice! has thy struggling bosom  
 For this so long contended? Oft when pride  
 Of inborn dignity, when sense of fame,  
 And every duty to a father, urg'd  
 My soul to combat love—how have the words  
 Of perfidy ensnar'd my easy heart!  
 Deceiv'd—rejected—wedded to Arsinoe!  
 But hence!—avaunt!—I will—I would forget  
 The perjur'd, yet the once belov'd Arsetes!  
 But see!—the traitor comes!—O, heaven! away  
 With woman's weakness—meet him as befits  
 a princess slighted and her love betray'd!

*Enter ARSETES.*

*Arse.* While thus the fairest of her sex withdraws



of rebel arms my father scap'd with life,  
 sav'd by the gallant aid of brave Arsetes.——  
 Ha!—thou art pale-- and now the mantling blood  
 Returns once more---What can this mean?---My heart  
 Has caught the alarm, and, Oh! my soul forebodes  
 Distress and anguish to my-hopeless love. [*Aside.*]

*Cleo.* It must be so---hence every vain respect!  
 I can no more dissemble---Hear, Arsinoe,  
 Hear then, and pity Cleonice's weakness!  
 While Lycomedes, with a monarch's care,  
 Plans future schemes of greatness---Cleonice,  
 Lost to herself, her rank, her sex's glory,  
 Dotes on the merits of a youth unknown!

*Arsi.* Orontes then——

*Cleo.* Orontes!—namé him not——  
 I own his worth—I own the sacred rights  
 A king and father claim——but I must own,  
 Though while I speak, confusion fills my soul,  
 Arsetes bears down all; and though the pride  
 Of fortune rais'd me high above his hopes,  
 A pleader here, which nothing could withstand,  
 By looks, by deeds, by all that can ennoble  
 The pride of youthful manhood, had prepar'd  
 My easy bosom to receive the guest,  
 That now, sole tyrant, reigns my bosom's lord!

*Arsi.* Then am I lost indeed!

[*Aside.*]

*Cleo.* Go, my Arsinoe,

And learn if aught is rumour'd that pertains  
 To my Arsetes :---soon this favour'd hero  
 Will leave Bithynia's court---but still remember

Veil'd in thy faithful breast to keep my secret :

To thee I trust my life, my fames my all ! *[Exit Arsi.*

*Cleo. [Alone.]* Lost and bewilder'd still I rove in  
fate's

Distressful labyrinth---Why, Cleonice,

Why didst thou leave the shore of calm indifference,

To launch upon the dangerous sea of love?

*Enter LYCOMEDES, and TERAMENES.*

*Lycom.* This day, my Cleonice, surely dawns

With happiest omens---He, whose valiant arm,

Join'd with Orontes, quell'd our rebel sons;

To whom the public voice gave every suffrage

Of grateful tribute, threaten'd to forsake

Our realm, and bear to other climes his sword,

But Teramenes, who with counsel sage

For ever watches o'er his country's weal,

Has found the happy means to fix him here,

To graft his virtues on Bithynia's stock,

Blest earnest of revenge !

*Cleo.* What means my father ?

*[Aside,*

My lord the duty Cleonice owes

Her country's welfare, and her father's honour,

Demands my thanks for every aid that Heaven

Gives to Bithynia's strength---and sure, Arsaces

Stands first in martial praise---But say, my father,

What happy means has Teramenes found

To fix him yours ?

*Lycom.* Such means as oft have dealt

Destruction on mankind : what oft has drawn

That his Pharnaces, his expected son,  
 Will join, ere yet they reach the bounds of Pontus,  
 His native bands;—there, kneeling at his feet,  
 Implore forgiveness—in this interval  
 Of fate and love, these lips shall once again  
 Assail with every soothing eloquence:  
 The cruel Cleonice; then, Agenon,  
 To Artabazus will I open all  
 My secret heart.—perhaps some future day  
 (O, busy hope!) may give me undisguis'd  
 To plead my cause before her, when my sighs  
 Shall in her breast revive the tender flame,  
 And love with endless rapture crown Pharnaces!

*[Exeunt severally.]*

## SCENE II.

*A Gallery. Enter LYCOMEDES and TERAMENES.*

*Lyc.* How stand the soldiers' hopes, my Teramenes?  
 What spirit breathes among their ranks, to give  
 A presage of the war?

*Tera.* The troops on fire,

Demand alone Orontes and Arsetes;

With loud reproach they execrate the foe,  
 And hail with joy the near-expiring truce.

*Lyc.* Yes, Teramenes—civil discord now;  
 That sheathes her sword, has left revenge to rear:  
 Her dreadful banner—Nemesis has heard:  
 Our solemn vows against exulting Pontus.

No more Polemon's ghost shall haunt my dreams,  
 Arsetes and Orontes shall extend  
 My name to latest times; the glorious love  
 Of empire and of arms, that fir'd my youth,  
 Shall warm my frozen age—too long compell'd  
 I smother'd in my breast the flame of hatred;  
 But when my soul forgets thy loss, Polemon,  
 Disgrace and ruin o'er these silver locks  
 Shed their black influence!—Orontes, welcome;  
 What hear'st thou of the foe?

*Enter ORONTES.*

*Oro.* Not unprepar'd  
 The king of Pontus, from Heraclea's walls,  
 Has drawn the choicest sons of valour forth,  
 That lie encamp'd beside Parthenius' stream.  
*Tera.* 'Tis said they wait the arrival of Pharnaces,  
 (The kingdom's hope) whom Artabasus sent,  
 What time Bithynia sign'd the truce with Pontus,  
 To distant Rome to train his youth in arms,  
 And Fame, with loudest tongue, proclaims his praise  
*Lyc.* A stripling when he left his father's court?  
*Tera.* He was; and now scarce twenty suns have  
 ripened

Our fruitful years, since Artabasus gain'd  
 By him a parent's name.—

*Lyc.* Such as he is—

O, scorpion memory! such perhaps had been  
 Bithynia's heir and Lycomedes' son!  
 O, Tera! O, Orontes! pity



To solitude and sadness, shuns the gaze  
Of admiration, let Arsetes yet  
Intrude on Cleonice's lonely hours,  
Ere cruel fate compels—

*Clea.* My lord, forbear—

This needed not—a hero's towering soul  
Soars high above the weakness of the lover:  
Since thou wilt part, it is not Cleonice  
Can here detain Arsetes—other charms—  
But I forget myself—excuse me, sir—  
Whate'er your aims—let not my presence damp  
The glorious fortune love and fate prepare—  
And think not e'er, awaken'd from her dream  
Of fond credulity, that Cleonice  
Will cloud your joys, or stop your path to greatness.

[*Exit,*

*Arise.* [*Alone.*] Where-am-I? sure I dream—my every  
sense

Is lost in wild amazement—

*Enter AGENOR.*

*Age.* All is ready,

And nothing now remains but that we quit  
Bithynia's court for Artabasus' camp—  
What mean those looks of sorrow, wherefore heaves  
Your swelling breast, while clouded with despair  
Your eyes, in silent pause, reproach the gods!

*Arise.* Alas! what shall I say—could'st thou believe it,  
Agenor? she for whom my soul had near  
Forgot a kingdom's fame, a father's love,

Each nice respect of honour, made my name  
 To future times the scorn of every tongue,  
 That fathers to their sons might point the example,  
 And bid them fear to fall as fell Pharnaces!  
 Even she, my friend, has now with cruel scorn,  
 Repaid my love—

*Age.* O, sir, forgive Agenor;  
 But sure in pity fate concurs even here  
 To hasten your resolves—whate'er the cause  
 Of Cleonice's anger, every moment  
 Is wing'd with peril—think what foes conspire  
 Against your father's peace, his life and fame.

*Age.* No more, no more, Agenor—best of friends,  
 In thee thy father Tiridates speaks.

Pharnaces! still thou shalt retrieve thy glory,  
 Burst from the veil of dark obscurity  
 And blaze in virtues beam—But yet, Agenor!  
 O, yet indulge a heart that sinks beneath  
 Accumulated anguish—can I leave  
 My Cleonice thus—alas! who knows  
 How soon, by rash resentment urg'd, her hand  
 May to Orontes yield her plighted faith!  
 While absent hence Pharnaces.—

*Age.* Wilt thou then linger here, unmindful still  
 Of fame and Artabasus?

*Age.* No—this night,

Be witness every power! we leave the court—  
 This only day indulge a lover's fondness!  
 The care be thine that Artabasus soon  
 Receive this signet, with the welcome news

A father's feelings---Thou, Orontes, saw'st  
My hapless boy---thy pious arms embrac'd  
My lost Polemon, as life's gushing stream  
Sprinkled his budding laurels---where was then  
A father's vengeful sword, while to his tent  
You bore him pale and senseless, distant far,  
Detain'd by coward age, these ears receiv'd  
The dreadful tidings, when his frantic mother  
Ended her wretched being---Powerful Jove!  
Shed from thy bitter urn the dregs of anguish  
On my poor span of life, withhold each comfort  
Which creeping years, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, claim,  
If I forgive the cruel hand that cropt  
This blooming plant, which else had flourish'd now  
And shelter'd with his shade my wasting age!  
*Oro.* Soon shall we lead th' embattled squadrons forth  
On Artabasus---should this boasted son  
Return, though conquest-plum'd, he comes perhaps  
A fated victim---

*Lyc.* O! that thought, Orontes,  
Gives vigour to my nerves!---Ye powers of vengeance!  
Hear, hear a father's voice, and through his son,  
Reach Artabasus's heart, that after years  
Of tedious expectation, now at length  
Return'd and scarcely welcom'd, he may fail  
A dreadful sacrifice---then through the sense,  
The thrilling sense of fond parental love,  
By his Pharnaces, let him know the pangs  
Of Lycomedes, when Polemon fell!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

*A private Apartment.---Enter CLEONICE and ARSINOE.*

*Cleonice.*

TALK not of comfort---'t is in vain, Arsinoe;

Arsetes leaves us---my relentless scorn,

Impell'd by frantic jealousy, the madness

Of woman's love, drives from Bithynia's court

The first of warriors: his right hand, that still

Held Victory captive, now to happier realms

Shall bear his fortune and his fame---the sun

That rises on the war shall see our troops

Pale and dismay'd for their Arsetes lost.

Who knows the event?---the same declining sun

May blush upon Bithynia's shame, and guild

With favouring rays the tents of Artabasus,

May smile upon his arms; while Lycomedes

Curses each day that wider spreads his shame.

*Ar. i.* Alas! my friend, your warmth of temper frames

The gloomiest prospects of imagina'd terror---

Though fortune now may frown---

*Cleo.* Thee too, Arsinoe,

Thee have I wrong'd---forgive thy Cleonice---

Art thou to blame, if, fram'd for gentlest passions,

Thy breast, the seat of innocence and love,

Confest the manly beauties of Arsetes,

Not bound by cruel ties of fame or duty?

Rouze, rouze, my feeble virtue---yes, I feel



New strength, and should Arsetes yet remain---  
I think, Arsinoe---Heaven support the thought!  
I think---I could resolve to yield him to thee---  
But see, thy father---

*Enter TERAMENES.*

*Tera.* All the hopes we form'd  
To keep Arsetes here, dissolve in air:  
Thus oft, presumptuous man too fondly grasps  
Ideal good: the hero, whom we deem'd  
Secur'd by every tie, declines the hand  
By Hymen given, endow'd with wealth and honours;  
While candour blushes on his modest cheek,  
He owns Arsinoe's virtues, owns the fate  
That now forbid's him to receive her love,  
Or longer to remain Bithynia's guest.

*Cleo.* Still art thou true, Arsetes!

*Tera.* My Arsinoe,

Why heaves thy bosom?---Still our guardian gods  
We trust will smile.

*Arsi.* My lord, Arsinoe stands

Prepar'd for all---be witness, Heaven! how oft  
I check'd each flattering hope: forgive, my father,  
The involuntary sigh! perhaps the last  
The fruitless effort of expiring passion!

*Tera.* Call up the thoughts that suit thy sex and rank:  
Time shall, with lenient hand, relieve thy anguish,  
Thy princess, with the gracious warmth of friendship  
Shall shed the balm of comfort in thy wounds:  
...Still art thou sad!---permit me, Cleonice,

D

Awhile retir'd, with dear paternal counsels,  
To arm her tender breast, that peace again  
May chase despair, and ease an anxious father.

[*Exit with Arsinoë.*]

*Cleo.* [*Alone.*] Though my heart joys to find Arsetes  
true,

Still am I wretched---yet again methinks,  
Fain would I once again behold that face  
Where love, where faith!--but O! 't is madness all!  
Doom'd to Orontes, when the lonely hour  
Invites to shades of sorrow, tyrant duty  
Makes even my grief a crime---but let me still,  
Let me once more, while yet without reproach  
I may indulge the sight, behold Arsetes,  
Take the last sad adieu---and like a wretch  
That shivers on the precipice of fate,  
Enjoy the parting glimpse of peace and happiness,  
Then sink at once to misery and Orontes. [*Exit.*]

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## SCENE II.

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*A Hall.*—*Enter LYCOMEDES, TERAMENES, and*  
*ORONTES.*

*Lyc.* The gods have heard our vows, my Teramenes,  
Ere yet the night ascends, to Pontus' camp  
Pharnaces will return; even now we heard  
From certain tidings, that the prince's signet  
Receiv'd by Artabasus, had confirm'd  
His near approach---

*Tera.* My liege, the enemy

Will feel new vigour from the expected sight  
Of young Pharnaces---ere a few short days  
Are past, th' advancing troops by Arcas led  
Will join our arms; united then, our bands  
May rush to certain conquest.

*Oro.* Teramenes,

Forgive me, if my soul revolts from counsels  
Which frigid prudence dictates---shall we then  
Remain inglorious, skulk within our walls,  
To wait uncertain aid---permit the foe  
To gather strength and courage from the presence  
Of this Pharnaces?---O! forbid it, virtue!  
That virtue which has fired Bithynia's sons  
To glorious conquest and extended sway!

*Lyc.* My empire's hope! on whose succeeding reign  
Sits expectation: this Pharnaces still  
Turns every scale of fight; his towering spirit,  
Enthusiast of the battle, looks with scorn  
On vulgar honours.---

*Oro.* To this boasted hero,  
Deck'd in his foreign triumphs, send the trumpet  
Of stern defiance, that Pharnaces' arm  
May meet with mine before the camp, and give  
A glorious opening to the morn of war!

*Lyc.* ---'Tis nobly utter'd---thy impatient sword  
May find employment---to the hostile camp  
A herald shall to-morrow bear our challenge  
To this Pharnaces, in the listed field  
Next day to engage in single fight, the champion

Dij

Bithynia's king shall send—but since the life  
Of my Orontes on the great event  
Suspended hangs—to thine six warriors more  
Shall join their dauntless names.

*Oro.* Let instant lots  
Decide the combatant ; or rather fix,  
Without the chance of lots, Orontes' sword,  
Which here he tenders, vowing from Pharnaces  
To tear his recent spoils, and to the manes  
Of your Polemon shed his life, or fall  
Himself a victim, happy in the applause  
Of his lov'd sovereign, and his country's tears.

*Enter ARSETES.*

*Arse.* Permit me, sir, since time, with rapid wing  
Now mocks my stay, to waken your remembrance,  
That call'd by fate to other ties which honour,  
Which duty must enforce, Arsetes now  
Prepares to leave the court, reluctant leave  
That court, where Lycomedes' royal hand  
Sheds lavish honours on his poor desert.

*Lyc.* Yet ere thou goest, thy valour that has long  
Sustain'd our arms, may add one labour more ;  
For still methinks, Arsetes, would my soul  
Detain thee here ; but fate, I know not why,  
In thee from Lycomedes tears a hero,  
Whom next Orontes he esteem'd his son ;  
This very now, ere thy arrival here,  
A challenge was decreed to dare Pharnaces  
To single fight—Orontes, 'midst the list



Of noble candidates for fame, demands  
The glorious peril, let us add to these  
Arsetes' name, and instant lots decide  
The champion fated on his vent'rous sword  
To bear Bithynia's vengeance—

*Arse.* [*Aside.*] Ha! what means  
My wayward destiny!

*Oro.* Behold the champion

Thy choice selects—see, Lycomedes, see,  
Suspense is on his brow—Is this the man  
Whose arms so oft—

*Arse.* Yes, 't is the man, Orontes!

Who fought Bithynia's battles, he whose force—  
But I am calm—No, Lycomedes, think not  
I shrink from honour's trial—should the lot  
Bring forth Arsetes' name—believe me, sir,  
Whate'er Pharnaces—I alone perhaps  
Am doom'd his victor, when the world shall own  
That what Pharnaces was, is then Arsetes.

*Lyc.* Enough, enough;—thy zeal, Orontes, here  
Prompts thee too far; nor thou, Arsetes, heed  
Orontes' eager warmth—to dare beyond  
The level of mankind, and bravely reach  
At virtue's height, is all that human firmness  
Can boast her own—Success, enthron'd above,  
Beyond a mortal's power, by Heaven alone  
Commissioned, crowns the deed—now let us hence—  
The lots once drawn, soon as the fated morn  
Ascends the steep to gild the turret's height,

Our knight shall wait the signal.

[*Exeunt* Lyr. Ter. and Oron.

*Arse.* [*Alone.*] Deity

Of blind events!—say, whither wouldst thou lead  
Pharnces now?—yet let me once again  
Behold my Cleonice, then forsake  
This fatal realm, no more a feign'd ally  
To-tread with hostile step Bithynia's court,

*Enter* CLEONICE.

She comes—once more 't is given me to address  
My Cleonice—'midst surrounding perils  
Yet happy, if I once again can pour  
My soul's full anguish here—

*Cleo.* Alas! Arsetes,

What shall I say, how speak my bosom's tumult?  
I fear too much I wrong'd thee; though our fate  
Can ne'er unite us, yet I feel my heart  
Will never cast Arsetes from the throng  
Where Love hath placed him.—

*Arse.* O! thou most unkind!

What had I done to merit!—when my soul  
With anguish bled—

*Cleo.* Alas! I thought thee false,

And though I knew thou never could'st be mine,  
I could not bear another should receive

That love, which once I deem'd was mine alone.

*Arse.* Another, Cleonice! is there then

Amidst the blooming circle of your sex

A maid whose charms—what treacherous tongue  
has dar'd

traduce my faith?—

*Cleo.* The king and Teramenes

Declar'd your purpose to espouse *Arsetes*;

fir'd at the thought, my rash ungovern'd temper—  
Thou know'st the rest.—

*Arse.* Forbear, I know too much:

For this, thou could'st unheard condemn the man

That lives not but in thee; bid the same breath

That warm'd my love to rapture, like a frost,

Nip every blossom of my future hopes!—

Thou never lov'dst—

*Cleo.* Then wherefore am I wretched?

Unjust *Arsetes*! give me back, ye powers,

That blest indifference, when as yet this pulse

Had never learnt to beat, these nerves to tremble

With fear; suspense, with all the nameless train

That banish peace for ever—In *Orontes*

I viewed a prince, to whom paternal care

Had pledg'd my nuptials; till a stranger's virtues

Drove every thought from *Cleonice's* breast

Of interest or ambition—still remember

I will—I would retain the inbred dignity

That suits the daughter of *Bithynia's* king.—

Enough, *Arsetes*, that my soul has stoop'd

To own her weakness—yet since cruel Fate

Forbids our union, when thy heart selects

Another love, may every happiness

That crowns the fondest pair—

*Arse.* O! never, never!

This basèd traitor to its first——

*Cleo.* The king——

*Enter LYCOMEDES.*

*Lyc.* Well dost thou honour here the man whose sword

May turn the tide of victory—my daughter,

Behold Arsetes, now decreed to meet

In combat with Pharnaces—know, the lots

Of fate are drawn; our fame is in thy hands;

Thou art our champion.

*Arse.* Since the will of destiny

Seals me thy warrior; till the morn dissolves

The truce with Pontus, let me from the court

Awhile retire, on something that concerns

My weal, my honour—when the blush of dawn

Shall strike the altar on the forest's edge

To Mars devoted, there thy guard shall find

A champion arm'd to meet Bithynia's foe,

If Artabasus' son accept the war.

*Lyc.* Till then the hours be all thy own——Nor  
claims

Bithynia, or Bithynia's king, from thee

But what befits thy honour—should success

Attend our hero's arms, these walls shall ring

With joyful peans, and to crown the day

With jubilee, the day that sets us free

From such a foe, Orontes to the altar

Shall lead his Cleonice; and the garlands



Of Hymen's triumphs mingle with the palms  
 Which victory displays—The important hour  
 Demands my counsel hence—till next we meet,  
 Farewell—and should Pharnaces, sway'd by virtue,  
 Accept our challenge—may Polemon's death  
 Sit on thy lance—a mother's grief and death  
 Edge thy keen faulchion, and a father's sufferings  
 Infuse new spirit in the day of fight,  
 That every eye may view with tears of transport  
 Arsetes' laurels and Bithynia's glory! [Exit:

*Cleo.* [Pauses.] Yet is there more! O, no! my fate  
 has long

Frown'd in the distant prospect—now the vision  
 Draws near, and misery with rapid speed  
 Rides on the advancing hour—thy life, Arsetes,  
 Expos'd to peril in to-morrow's field,  
 Excites each fear—for thee my prayers shall pierce  
 Jove's awful throne; yet must thy victory  
 Doom me a wretch for ever—led to grace  
 Thy triumph in O.ontes' hated bands!  
 Yet be it so—fate, honour, virtue, all  
 Demand this sacrifice!—and should the event  
 Of battle crown thee with the victor's wreath,  
 And still Bithynia's vows detain thee here,  
 Arsinoe be thy bright, thy dear reward—  
 She loves thee, my Arsetes—yes—O, Heaven!  
 Why do I weep—let her bestow that happiness  
 Which Cleonice never——

*Arse.* Still thou know'st not

What fate has yet reserv'd—the ensuing combat

May clear a mystery, which till now compell'd  
My bleeding heart had kept from all—from thee!  
Then by each past, now hopeless hour of love,

Still cherish in thy breast the gentle flame

Arsetes kindled, till the expected sun

Sets on the battle's fate; our fate perhaps

Hangs on the equal balance—Cleonice

Will ne'er refuse these moments to Arsetes;

Thou know'st not what I feel for thee, my soul

Labours beneath a load of secret anguish:

While danger, ambush'd in a thousand forms,

Waits every step, and threatens my way with ruin.

*Cleo.* Thou hast prevail'd, Arsetes; and what'er

The fateful birth that waits to be disclosed,

My love shall hope the event—

*Arse.* The day declines,

And warns me hence—

*Cleo.* O, Heaven! we meet no more

Till that eventful time! yet go, Arsetes;

Go whither glory calls—Hear, every power!

Raise o'er his head the buckler of defence,

Pluck from the hostile hand the nerve of strength,

And bring him victor home—nor let a tear

From Cleonice stain the hour that gives

Birthynia safety, and Arsetes fame!

*Arse.* [*Alone.*] Methinks my pulse more quickly

beats, and all

My spirits rouse, as nearer to the goal

Verges my fate.

[*Exit.*

*Enter ACENOR.*

*Arise. Agenor!*

*Age. O, my friend!*

Reflect what perils hover round; some God  
(forgive me, prince!) that frowns upon our rashness,  
Has form'd the labyrinth that threatens now—  
This combat by the king propos'd—

*Arise. O, wherefore*

Did not Orontes mark the champion's lot,  
Then Fate, perhaps—But yet my friend, this fight,  
This mystic fight, may work some means to unravel  
The knot of destiny—The hour now presses;  
The herald soon will seek my father's camp.

*Age. Then let us hence!—The war-like troops  
of Pontus*

Impatient wait to see their prince return;  
Whose glories won in distant climes, attract  
Each listening ear, while every soldier, warm  
With expectation, pants to view that face  
Where Mars propitious in life's opening prime,  
With youthful graces blends the victor's smile—  
Your father too—

*Arise. I feel, I feel it here!*

The godlike, virtuous ardor! yes, Agenor,  
My soul is up in arms—methinks I see  
Good Artabacus darting through the ranks—  
His ardent looks—methinks I hear him chide,  
With fond paternal warmth, his tardy son.  
Now, on his reverend cheek, where age begins.

To shed its silver honours, stands the tear  
 Of tenderness, while all the parent longs  
 To see those features ripening into manhood,  
 Which last he viewed in early bloom—I hear  
 The shout of charging hosts! the neigh of steeds!  
 The battle joins, and no Pharnaces there!  
 Now danger stalks around, and Artabasu—  
 Distracting thought! fly, fly, my best Agenor,  
 Fly to redeem our fame, and save a father! [*Exeunt*]

### SCENE III.

*Another Apartment. Enter ORONTES and ZOPYRUS.*

*Zop.* Compose yourself, my lord.

*Oro.* Zopyrus, never—

Was it for this I deem'd his absence near,  
 And now behold him with Orontes join'd  
 In glory's list—nay more, by partial fortune  
 Declar'd Bithynia's champion! Should he fall,  
 He leaves a name in arms to cope with mine!—  
 But should he conquer! Hell is in that thought?  
 Who knows, Zopyrus!—whither may the king's  
 Too partial views incline?—The kingdom freed  
 From such a foe—Polemon's death reveng'd—  
 He may, perhaps, forget—The crown, Zopyrus,  
 That mistress of my soul, to which ambition  
 Points every aim, may grace a stranger's brow!

*Zop.* What says Orontes?

*Oro.* This right arm might reach



His life—but policy forbids my hatred  
To blaze abroad—The many blindly dote  
On him they scarcely know—Zopyrus, speak,  
Art thou my friend?

*Zop.* Hold—let me think—Orontes  
Bears not the coward's scruples—there is yet  
Perhaps a way—

*Oro.* Pause not, but speak—

*Zop.* 'Tis here—  
Arsetes must not live—Give but the word,  
He dies, and dies ere he can meet Pharnaces!

*Oro.* But how?

*Zop.* Thou know'st that I command the guard  
To escort Arsetes from the fane of Mars  
To meet Pharnaces; from a desperate band,  
The power of gold, and vast reward, shall single  
A chosen few, that at a signal given  
Shall rid your soul of every fear in him:  
And more, to blind suspicion's eye, their arms,  
Their vests shall seem of Pontus' troops: the deed  
Effected once, the ensuing fight shall see  
These tools of our great enterprize expos'd  
Full in the front of slaughter, that in heat  
Of onset they may fall, and in their fall  
Mock all discovery.

*Oro.* Come to my breast!  
By Heaven it ripens well—Then, when he's dead,  
We lead the troops to well-feign'd vengeance!—Say,  
Where lies the force of Pontus?

*Zop.* Station'd near

E

Bithynia's bounds, that thrice an arrow's flight  
May reach their outmost guard.

*Oro.* Now, hated rival!

Now triumph for a moment---My revenge  
Prepares such greeting, never more thy deeds  
Shall shine to vulgar eyes---on proud Arsetes  
Death soon shall close his everlasting gate,  
While life to me displays the glorious path  
That leads the daring mind to fame and empire.

[*Exeunt.*]

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ACT IV. SCENE I.

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*An Open Place in the City. ORONTES alone.*

*Orontes.*

WHENCE is this seeming weight, shake off, my soul,  
This lethargy, and be again Orontes.  
The truce is ended---all is safe---Arsetes  
Accepts our challenge---and ere this Arsetes  
Waits at the forest's edge---How slowly night  
Has dragg'd her course! at length the day returns,  
To lift his beams upon those eyes, that never  
Must view his setting splendor---See! the king!--  
Dissimulation, spread thy subtlest snares,  
Teach me to amuse the fond credulity  
Of easy fools, with shew of what my heart  
Disdains to feel---but hold---

*Enter LYCOMEDES, attended.*

*Lyc.* You orient sun,  
That, glancing from the dewy mountain, sheds  
The day-spring's early blushes, on this morn  
Shines with redoubled lustre ; on this morn,  
That gives *Arsetes* to the field of fame,  
Our empire's champion——O, my best *Orontes* !  
This hour, methinks the hand of Heaven once more  
On destiny's eternal page begins  
To enrol *Bithynia*'s honours——Speak, my son !  
Thy generous soul, now wrapt with glory, pants  
To share *Arsetes*' danger.

*Ora.* *Lycomedes,*

I own my spirit rouzes at the call  
Of martial conflict ; yet, forbid it, Heaven !  
My heart, impell'd by envy, should repine  
To view another's honours——by the hand  
Of Mars, the patron of my wars, I swear  
There's not a breast would feel *Orontes*' joy  
To hear the fate my ardent hope divines  
This morn-awaits the glories of *Arsetes*.

*Lyc.* O, truly great !—nor think thy noble sword  
Shall useless sleep ; no—should the great event  
Thy soul forebodes, attend *Arsetes*' valour,  
Thyself with *Teramenes* join'd, shall pour  
Our eager thousands on the troops dismay'd  
Of *Pontus* : *Arcas* shall arrive to join  
Our glorious arms ; and universal victory  
Clap her glad wings—then every happy wreath,

E ij

That hope had form'd, shall deck these hoary temples,  
 And choral virgins hymn Bithynia's bands  
 Return'd in triumph home ! Our Teramenes,  
 Already now, in pomp of martial pride,  
 Leaves these glad walls, and swells with war's deep  
 notes.

The soldier's ardor, while the plaited mail  
 Heaves on each bosom——

*Enter CLEONICE, attended.*

O, my Cleonice !

Age now, with backward gaze, on memory's plain  
 Revives forgotten honours——Say, my child,  
 Owns not thy heart a more than woman's feelings  
 On this eventful moment !

*Cleo.* Yes, my soul  
 Expands to greater hopes---each other thought  
 Now sleeps neglected---while the mightier claims  
 Of filial duty and my country's love  
 Possess me whole---the noble mind that draws  
 Its boasted lineage from a race of kings ;  
 Of kings, the sacred delegates of Heaven ;  
 Should banish every selfish view that tends not  
 To wide diffusive good---Oh ! should the hand  
 Of prosperous fortune mark this happy day,  
 What thousands then will hail with rapture's voice  
 Arsetes' blest return !---for this event  
 Old age shall lift his wrinkled palms in praise ;  
 The virgin's tears shall vanish into smiles ;  
 Redoubled warmth shall nerve the soldier's arm ;



Till conquest swell the breath of fame to spread  
Bithynia's deeds, and lift her name to Heaven!

[*Dead march at a distance.*]

*Lyc.* Whence is that sound? the martial symphony  
With Teramenes!—these are other strains  
Than joy or victory!—

*Cleo.* The notes of sorrow!—

And now 't is silence all!—[*Music.*]—Again!

*Oro.* My heart

Beats high with anxious hope and fear.

[*Aside.*]

*Lyc.* Orontes!

What do I see! these aged eyes distinguish

A martial train with low inverted pikes,

And banners trail'd to earth!—and hark! more near

Methinks I hear deep murmurs of distress,

And mingled groans, that peal in fancy's ear

Arsetes' name!—

*Cleo.* Arsetes'!—look, my father,

The low-hung trophy and the dusty arms.—

*Enter in procession a troop of Soldiers, to a dead march,*

*advancing slowly from the further end of the stage:*

*first a company trailing their lances and trophies in the*

*dust, then the helmet, shield, and lance of Arsetes,*

*borne by two Soldiers; next TERAMENES, and last a*

*bier with a dead body, covered with a mantle, the*

*Soldiers bearing branches of cypress and palm: the*

*procession advancing towards the front of the stage,*

*halts, and the music ceases.*

*Cleo.* [*Advancing towards the Trophies.*] Ma! sure I know that crest! That buckler's orb

Blaz'd with Arsetes' honours! —

*Lyc.* Teramenes,

Whence is this dreadful pomp of death?

*Tera.* I cannot —

I cannot speak! — O, royal sir, behold  
Bithynia's champion! broken is the lance  
Of war, the genius of the battle faints!  
Arsetes is no more! — lo! there he lies  
Pale from the hand of fate, no more to wake  
To fame, to virtue, or Bithynia's cause.

*Lyc.* My daughter! — Heaven! why am I thus unmov'd!  
[*Cleonice faints.*]

When age, unfeeling, sinks not with the stroke,  
That now perhaps — But she revives — remove her  
From this heart-breaking scene. —

*Cleo.* [*Recovering.*] Yet hold — forbear —  
Ye shall not tear me hence — despair and grief  
Now freeze my seat of life; the dreadful tidings  
Shall load each passing gale, and every virgin,  
Whose breast has known the agonies of love,  
Lament with me, and mark this day with horror!

*Lyc.* What means my daughter!

*Cleo.* Pardon, Lycomedes;

Orestes, pardon — to dissemble further  
Were insult to his corse — I lov'd Arsetes,  
And I avow my flame —

*Oro.* In all my rival

[*Aside.*]

*Lyc.* Unhappy girl!—yet think not I will chide;  
I feel thy anguish here!—

*Tera.* Where now is faith!

Where royal trust in princes!—while Arsetes  
Thus falls a sacrifice to murderous treason,  
And ends his life by an assassin's sword!

*Lyc.* Ha! murder'd, Teramenes!—

*Oro.* Speak; relate

Each horrid circumstance!—

*Tera.* Thou know'st, Arsetes

Directed, that Zopyrus might attend

Two hours from dawning day at Mars's altar:

But ere th' appointed time, a band of ruffians

Attack'd the hapless youth; in vain his valour

Oppos'd their fury; cover'd o'er with wounds,

Senseless he fell; but when Zopyrus came

And ask'd, with tears, the assassin's name, his eyes

Then nearly clos'd, he rais'd, and murmur'd forth

Pharnaces' name, and died!

*Oro.* [*Aside.*] Be firm, my soul,

And hide thy secret triumph!

*Lyc.* 'Tis enough!

Pharnaces!—Artabasu!—Gods, I thank you!

*Clea.* I weep not now—my heart would fain assume

The cruel firmness of unfeeling woe!

Arsetes murder'd! murder'd by Pharnaces!

Where, where was justice, where the guardian powers

That watch o'er virtue!—Yet, it will not be—

My resolution melts, and Nature pays

This streaming anguish to Arsetes' memory!

*Lyc.* My child, my Cleonice, in thy sorrows  
A king and father share—for prayers and tears  
Are all an old man's weapons: hoary age,  
That breaks the vigour of Alcides, leaves  
These idle sinews useless as the arms  
Of female weakness!

*Cleo.* Why, eternal powers!

Why is not courage given to woman? shall not  
Resentment brace our sex's feeble arm!

I feel, I feel it now—my bosom swells

With fury, with distraction—See Polemon,

A bleeding sacrifice!—lo! next my mother

In death's convulsive pangs, and last Arsetes,

The murder'd victim of the worst of foes!

*Lyc.* Hear, mighty Jove! and send thy dread vice-  
gerent

To weigh in equal scales the deeds of men!

See, Cleonice—see where Artabasus

Shrinks in the awful trial?—soon, my daughter,

Vengeance shall rear her bloody crest—Pharnaces

Shall pay the forfeit of his deed.

*Cleo.* 'Tis there

My hopes alone can triumph—

[*Here the bier is brought forward.*]

Lycomedes,

Thou know'st my weakness—then permit me here

To pay one mournful tribute—one last look,

To poor Arsetes!

[*Advancing towards the bier.*]

*Lyc.* Hold! my Cleonice,



It is too much——forbear!——the nearer view  
May start thee into frenzy.

*Cleo.* No, my father,

I can—I will support it—[*approaching the body*]——Is  
this Arsetes!

Is this Bithynia's triumph!——See the mantle  
That wraps his clay-cold limbs, the fatal present  
Of Cleonice's hand!——O, my Arsetes!  
Pale, pale and lifeless!——murderous slaves!——O, where,  
Where are those eyes that shed their beams of love.  
On Cleonice! where those lips that wak'd  
The heart-felt tenderness!——Distraction!——Hear me,  
O, Heaven!——Arsetes, hear!——while thus I clasp  
Thy senseless corse, while yet thy spirit hovers  
O'er thy cold clay, in pity to our sorrows!  
O, never shall these eye-lids know repose,  
This breast be still'd to comfort——never——never  
Till this accurs'd Pharnaces——Ha!——look there!——  
Th' exulting murderer triumphs!——Stay, Pharnaces——  
Fly not——behold, he bleeds!——see there the dread  
Tribunal met, when Minos lifts the urn——  
His justice shall avenge my dear Arsetes! [Exit.

*Lyc.* Her griefs are wild——attend and sooth her sor-  
rows. [To Attendants, as they go out.

*Oro.* Tears are but woman's tribute——to the soldier  
A soldier pays far other dues——Arsetes  
Demands Bithynia's gratitude——Here rest  
Your honour'd load, while on the cold remains  
Of this lamented chief, Orontes vows  
An offering to his shade——O! sir, permit me

To second, with my own, the soldier's zeal.

*Lyc.* Thou art my age's hope, the stay on which  
My kingdom leans—take all thy courage claims,  
Go—lead the troops to arms.

*Oron.* This sword, that oft

Has fought my sovereign's cause, again unsheath'd,  
Thirsts for the blood of Pontus—Yes, I see,

I see the genius of Arsetes lead

The embattled squadrons, while his spirit still

Breathes in each breast, and marks the foe for ven-  
geance.

[*Exit.*

*Lyc.* Be it our care to pay the last sad rights  
To lost Arsetes—to the clouds ascend—

His funeral flame, and call the gods to witness

Our grateful tribute to the chief we mourn;

Then in a sacred vase select with care

His dear remains, to place them near the urn

Where the lov'd relics of Polemon, borne

A mournful trophy, ever in our sight,

Feeds still our grief, and ministers the gale

That blows the smother'd flame of deep revenge!

[*Exeunt, the procession going off in order.*

## SCENE II.

*A private Apartment. Enter ORONTES and ZOPYRUS.*

*Oron.* Destruction to my hopes! what gods averse  
Could blast my fortune further!—Can it be!  
Zopyrus—all our schemes abortive thus!

What he, whom lifeless now the city mourns,  
Is not Arsetes—Arsetes and Pharnaces  
The same——

*Zop.* There is no room for doubt—the tablets  
Found on the vestments of the slain unknown,  
Confirm the important truth.

*Oron.* Unthinking wretch!

A thousand proofs recur, that speak too plain——  
His birth conceal'd—surprise when Lycomedes  
Propos'd the combat with the prince—distraction!  
A turn like this may frustrate all!—it seems  
With tenfold ruin!—Cleonce's love  
To this Arsetes starts another train  
Of galling doubts——What's to be done?

*Zop.* Already

The soldier pants impatient on the edge  
Of battle—Who can tell the event? Pharnaces  
May fall, and crown your wish.

*Oron.* But still the chance

Of war is ever doubtful——Could we draw  
Pharnaces from the tumult of the fight,  
The tufted grove, that shades the fane of Mars,  
Might hide an ambush'd force, to overwhelm at once  
Our foe in swift destruction.

*Zop.* 'T is a thought

The cause itself inspires.

*Oron.* Zopyrus, go;

Inflame the soldiers with Arsetes' name,  
That name shall second our design—I haste  
To lead them to the field—away—— [Exit Zopyrus.

*Oron. [Alone.]* Ascend,

Black mischief, child of hell, from the dire gloom  
Of burning Acheron, whence perfidy,  
Assassination, treason (names that shake  
The coward soul), breathe forth inspiring aid  
To vast ambition, at whose dazzling shrine  
Orontes ever bends—I feel, I feel  
The sacred influence here—If fortune yet  
Assist my arms, in fight Pharnaces falls  
An open victim; but if still averse  
She thwart my glorious aims, what force denies,  
Deep covert guile shall give; and all my fears  
Be hush'd for ever in Pharnaces' blood. *[Exit.]*

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### SCENE III.

*The Camp of ARTABASUS and PHARNACES.*

*Art.* Yes, my Pharnaces, my full bosom heaves  
With all a father's feelings—every god  
That knows the transport here, receive my vows  
Of gratitude and praise: thy blest return  
Each year shall chronicle; on that glad day  
The hallowed fanes shall grateful incense breathe  
To those high powers, whose providential care  
Reliev'd my anxious fears—Pharnaces lives!  
In safety lives, clasp'd in these arms of fondness;  
Yet I could chide—for O! restest, my son,  
How I have suffer'd in thy painful absence,  
Could'st thou so far forget—



*Phar.* O, royal sir!

Believe me, while I swear, that oft the son  
Reproach'd the lover; oft I sympathiz'd  
With Artabasus.

*Arta.* Though to partial nature

The warmer sallies of ungovern'd youth,  
Ere long experience turns the page of life,  
Are venial errors, yet thy rashness here  
Startles belief—What perils hast thou 'scap'd!  
What deathful snares! perhaps, a fate like his,  
Whom all Bithynia for Arsetes mourns.  
Thou saidst it was Araxes—

*Phar.* 'T was Araxes,

Whose mien and near resemblance to your son  
Assisted my design—When at my suit  
You gave consent to accept Arsetes' challenge,  
I trusted to Araxes' breast my secret,  
Disguis'd him in the vest and arms I wore,  
When 'midst Bithynia's squadrons, with design  
Himself should for Arsetes' wage the combat,  
Instructed first to yield himself my prisoner:  
From hence I hop'd to plan some happy means  
Of peace, by conference open'd with the foe.  
But this distressful fate, mysterious heaven  
Has cast on poor Araxes, baffles all;  
And leaves me lost, uncertain whither points  
This deed, or what inhuman breast design'd it.  
*Arta.* Swear, my Pharnaces, never more to tempt  
Our hostile gods in Lycomedes' court,

Nor give that life to hazard, which thy father  
Would ransom with his own.

*Phar.* [*kneels.*] By this rever'd,

This awful hand, Pharnaces vows to sacrifice  
His all to filial duty, every act

Of his succeeding life shall speak the son :

And, O ! if fate requires ! even love itself  
Shall bleed a victim at the shrine.

*Arta.* Think not

That Artabasu will condemn the love

That honour sanctifies—for Cleonice,

If ever rumour's tongue can claim belief,

She merits all you feel—Nay, more, my soul

Could witness Lycomedes' regal virtues,

Did not ambition, that excess of kings,

That thirst of widen'd empire, that too far

Inspir'd his early reign, now, even in age

Impel him to unsheath invasion's sword.

The king, who, urg'd by partial glory, breaks

The sacred ties that link a social world,

Should boast no more the image of those gods,

Whose wide benevolence extends o'er all !

*Phar.* Still, still my hopes, with fond presumption,  
form'd

Ideal scenes of happiness—Could peace,

With outstretch'd arms, embrace the warring nations,

Could Lycomedes learn one self-same spirit,

Inform'd his foe Pharnacès, and his once

Belov'd Arsetes—Yet I dare, my father,

Boast a soft advocate in Cleonice.

*Arta.* O, my Pharnaces, what can filial duty  
With him that loves, and loves like Artabasus!  
Ere day can yield to night, a trusty herald  
Shall to Bithynia's king, try every art  
Of eloquence, to bend his soul to terms.  
That fit the king and father—Grant it, Heaven!  
The day that sees my lov'd Pharnaces happy,  
Gives Artabasus all—Then close, ye powers,  
Life's anxious scenes, and let me sleep in peace—  
Whence is that noise? [*Alarm and shout.*]

*Enter AGENOR, his Sword drawn.*

*Age.* To arms, my liege, the foe,  
Led by Orontes, issuing from the town,  
Advances on our camp—

*Phar.* Orontes!—Heaven  
Has heard Pharnaces' prayer—My lord, my father,  
My soul's on fire, and pants to meet in field  
My hated rival!

*Arta.* Go, Agenor; bear  
Our instant orders to the troops, to range  
Their serried files—Pharnaces leads them on  
To fight—to victory—

*Phar.* Hear, God of arms!  
Whose smiles have grac'd my earliest youth—O hear  
This last request—Still in Pharnaces breathe  
The spirit of the war!

*Arta.* Thy ardor wakes  
My youth again—Hear now, a father's voice;  
With thy strong genius, lead him through the maze

F ij

Of dangerous battle, that these eyes may trace  
 His fearless steps, behold his brandish'd sword  
 Shine forth the guardian of a nation's honour;  
 And, while his arm asserts his country's cause,  
 Assert the common rights of all mankind. [*Exeunt.*]

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ACT V. SCENE I.

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*An Apartment on the summit of a Tower, commanding a  
 Prospect of the Fields without the Walls. Two Urns  
 on two Pedestals. Enter CLEONICE.*

*Cleonice.*

O, NIGHT! that soon wilt stretch oblivion's wing  
 O'er many a wretch, drive on the lagging shades  
 And close the day's dire horrors!—though to me  
 Sleep brings no refuge, yet congenial gloom  
 Befits my anguish---five revolving years  
 Thy senseless ashes in their peaceful dwelling  
 Have every day, Polemon, wak'd remembrance,  
 And oft receiv'd the tributary tears.  
 But here's a stroke surpassing all---Arsetes  
 Shrunk to this narrow space!--at early dawn  
 He tower'd in arms---a little hour he lay  
 A breathless corpse, and here his sad remains,  
 Warm from the funeral flame, are clos'd for ever!

*Enter ARSINOE.*

If thou bring'st comfort, speak!



*Arsi.* Alas! my friend,

I know it not—since from the walls my father  
Led forth his followers, to support the attack  
Of brave Orontes on the foe, suspense  
Has dwelt on all—the citizens affrighted  
Hearken to every sound that whispers aught  
Of fight or victory—

[*Distant alarms.*]

Heaven, guard my father.

*Cleo.* Sure 't is the distant murmur of the fight  
That swells upon the wind, and see, Arsinoe,  
Ere yet the shade of evening faintly spreads  
O'er the dun fields, see through the dusty whirl  
The flash of arms——

*Arsi.* But hark! some hasty foot  
Sounds on the steps that lead to this recess:  
O! let me fly, and ease my beating heart  
For Teramenes' safety!

[*Exit.*]

*Cleo.* Nearer still  
I hear the deepening roar---another shout!  
There, there perhaps, Pharnaces, hated name!  
Sheds wide destruction!—can it be, ye powers!  
Can he who stoop'd to murder, rise in aught  
That's great or noble? sure, Arsetes' shade  
Should hover round, and in the day of battle  
Wither his strength!----Some fatal news at hand!  
'T is Teramenes---Heavens!-----

*Enter TERAMENES, and Officers.*

*Terna.* Where, where 's the king?

---O, Cleonice-----

F ij

*Cleo.* Speak——

*Tera.* Bithynia's lost!——

Our latest hour is come.——

*Enter LYCOMEDES.*

*Lyc.* What means this tumult?

What from the camp---but now a peal of shouts  
Broke on my slumbering sense---how stand our hopes?

*Tera.* The foe is in the walls!---our bands repuls'd  
By Artabasus and his son, retreated  
To gain the gates---with them the conquering troops  
Of Pontus enter'd.——

*Lyc.* 'T is enough---these eyes

Have seen enough of woe!---Where is Orontes?

*Tera.* I saw him last, with dauntless courage, brave  
The hostile troops, when headed by Pharnaces  
They thunder'd through the gates, at which dire moment  
He vanish'd from my sight, and O! I fear

He falls a victim to this dreadful day!——

But time forbids our vain laments---this instant

The victor may be here---one way remains

That yet may save my king---the western tower

Is still our own, and may perhaps sustain

The foe's attack, till Arcas shall arrive——

But now, Arsinoe thither with a guard

I sent---retire, my liege, with Cleonice,

In safety there.

*Lyc.* No---though this trembling arm

Shrinks from the buckler's weight, I can provoke

The death I wish for from the pitying foe!

Come forth ; this sword, that long has idly slept,  
Shall once again——

*Cleo.* What means my father?—yet  
Retract your purpose—think on Cleonice!  
Forsaken here—I see, I see the hand  
Of ruffian force drag by the silver locks  
Thy venerable age—I see those features,  
That oft have fondly smil'd on Cleonice,  
In agony distorted.—What remains

For me at that curst moment?—wild with horror  
To rend my scatter'd hair—against the pavement  
Dash these poor limbs—then, bare my breast to meet  
The steel, yet reeking with a parent's life,  
And mingle blood with his that gave me being!——

*Lyc.* Distracting image!—O, my child! my child!  
And shall I then——this moment I could yield  
The last cold drops that linger in these veins——  
And bless the hand that struck me—yet when death  
Draws his dark veil—to catch a glimpse of life,  
But to behold thee die—Haste, let me hence  
To lose the dreadful thought—a minute longer  
May place us safe beyond the future reach  
Of fate, of misery, and Artabasus!

*Cleo.* O, hear me still—yet let these filial tears  
Prevail.—Death is the last, the sure resource,  
And when fate closes every path that leads  
To future hope—this arm can then, my father,  
Fix one great period to a life of woes.

*Tern.* My sovereign, Artabasus and Barzanes  
Are near at hand, from hence we may discern

Their bucklers blaze [*looking out*]; away, my liege!

*Lyc.* O! never!—

They shall be met—these wither'd limbs—look there,  
See those sad monuments— [*Points to the Urns.*

And shall the hands,

The murderous hands by which they fell, here grasp  
The sword in triumph?—No, these trembling feet  
Shall meet their fury. [*Going.*

*Cleo.* Yet—O, yet, my father!

One moment hear—

*Tera.* Forgive me, royal sir!

If thus compell'd—Learchus, help---

*Lyc.* [*Struggling.*] Unhand me—

'Tis more than treason---hence!—

[*Drops his sword in the struggle.*

*Cleo.* Lo! there, my father,

Some god descends, and from your nerveless arm

Strikes your resisting weapon.

*Lyc.* O, shame! shame!

'Tis sure the work of heaven!---then all is past!

I yield---Lead, lead me where thou wilt! [*Shout.*

*Tera.* Again!

Conduct them safely through the secret gate,

Meantime myself, with some few friends will seek

Orontes, and secure my king's retreat. [*Exit.*

*Cleo.* O! hear me, Heaven! for Lycomedes hear!

Still save him, sinking in this gulph of ruin!

Or let one moment overwhelm us both in death,

And end a father's and a daughter's woes! [*Exeunt.*



## SCENE II.

*An open Place in the City. Enter ARTABASUS, BARZANES, and Soldiers.*

*Art.* Thus far, Barzanes, has the victor wreath  
Crown'd virtue with success—our arms; by heaven  
Impell'd to guard the sacred rights of men,  
Have to their deep recess pursu'd the foe.  
The city now is ours---the hostile bands  
Submissive, or dispers'd, contend no longer;  
Then sheath the sword of death, and bid resentment  
To mercy yield her reign---the noble mind,  
Though justice draw the sword, regrets that triumph  
Humanity must mourn: for Lycomedes,  
Give heedful orders, that whate'er shall chance,  
To make him prisoner, to our better fortune,  
They treat him with such honours as befit  
His name and rank, a captive of the war.

*Enter Officer.*

*Off.* My liege, this instant Lycomedes, taken,  
With Cleonice, as they sought to gain  
The western tower, conducted by the guard,  
Attend your sovereign will. [Exit.

*Enter LYCOMEDES, CLEONICE in chains, Guards.*

*Lyc.* [Entering] Lead me to him,  
Whom Lycomedes' evil star has rais'd  
On fallen Bithynia's ruin---Cleonice

Associate in thy father's woes——Are these  
The hands that once I fondly press'd in mine,  
When on my knee thy prating infancy  
Held me in all a parent's dear suspense?  
Are these lov'd hands now clasp'd in rugged steel  
And slavish manacles?

*Cleo.* These hands, my father,  
Exult in chains that give to Cleonice,  
A glorious share in Lycomedes' sufferings.  
Nor are they bonds, since still these filial arms  
Embrace my father——O! believe me, sir,  
To suffer thus with you is height of bliss,  
Compar'd to freedom banish'd from your presence.

*Artia.* If thou art he——O, Lycomedes!—hear  
No more thy foe, but brother—would to heaven  
Thy age would now repose in peace! those hairs  
Demand respect and honour—let me then  
Exchange these slavish ties, for other ties  
Of amity and love.

[*Makes a sign to the Guard who takes off his chains.*]

For thee, fair princess,  
What shall I say?—these arms proph.m'd, demand  
More than a king's atonement. [*Takes off her chains.*]  
Is there ought  
Beside the gift of freedom?

*Cleo.* Artabasis,

There needs no more—from him that slew my brother  
All gifts are equal---though to the woman's weakness  
I yield these tears, my firmer soul disdains  
The tribute nature pays;---then once again

Restore those shackles--give me, to the depth  
Of dungeon gloom---there 's nor a hostile pang  
That enmity inflicts, but Cleonice

Shall meet it all!--My father too!--O, Heaven!  
Hence female softness---yes, behold that weak  
Depress'd old age, behold this bloom of youth.  
Nurs'd in the pomp of courts---yet, Artabasus,  
This pair, unshaken, dares your worst of pains.

*Lyc.* Hear every god my vows renew'd---hear too  
Polemon's shade! when'er this hand shall join  
In friendly league with Pontus, haunt each hour  
Of ebbing life with horror's direst forms!

*Arta.* Yet hear me; Lycomedes, still reflect,

Thyself a warrior once, in fight he fell,

Fell as a hero ought.-- In arms of old

When demi-gods have fought, the fields have oft  
Borne slaughter'd chiefs, whose parents from the sky  
View'd their pale sons, and yielded to their fate.

*Lyc.* Hear, hear, ye fathers; hear how cool the victor  
Can palliate death, and sooth a parent's loss.

Polemon fell in fight---yes, Artabasus,

Nobly indeed he fell---too daring youth!

Whose unfledg'd open valour met the arm

Of veteran cruelty---but hear, proud man,

Do all thy enemies so fairly perish?---

How died Arsetes! hapless youth---the last,

The glorious work of Artabasus' race!

Midst all my sufferings, still I joy to know

Polemon died a hero---Had the hand

Of time drawn out his early age to years

Of ripe experience, he, like poor Arsetes,  
Had fall'n the murderer's victim.

*Arta.* Little, sure,  
Thou' know'st the work of fate,—the youth who fell  
Was by Pharnaces——

*Cleo.* By Pharnaces!——yes,  
I know it well—Is this the glorious hero,  
The boasted pupil in the school of Mars?  
Did he for this in Rome's immortal ranks  
Learn the brave trade of arms, to edge the sword  
Of base assassination, that the wiles  
Of black conspiracy might catch that life,  
Which ne'er had sunk in equal field of combat!  
Yes——my Arsetes——to Pharnaces' cruelty  
Thou fall'st a victim—fall'st by him, whose arm  
Had else perhaps confess'd thy valour's force.  
Then had those limbs, my father, never felt  
The weight of chains—yet should Orontes live,  
His valorous arm—perhaps Pharnaces' life  
Atones for poor Arsetes——

*Arta.* Every power  
Forbid the implication! Lycomedes,  
Could I as well appease each vengeful thought  
For lost Polemon, as I now can clear  
The virtue of my son, by lying fame  
Traduc'd——

*Cleo.* Did not his lips all pale in death  
Proclaim Pharnaces guilty?

*Arta.* There indeed,  
Mysterious darkness lurks—but, Lycomedes,



Speak---should the hero whose triumphant arm  
Espous'd Bithynia's cause---should he yet live---

*Cleo.* Yet live! what means this cruel sport with woe?

*Arta.* Hear then, and wondering hear---Arsetes lives,  
Arsetes and Pharnaces are the same.

*Lyc.* The same!---speak, Artabasus---

*Enter Officer.*

*Off.* Haste, my sovereign!

Haste to the grove of palms,---the prince assail'd

By numbers, with Orontes at their head,

A hundred lances glitter at his breast,

And all their cry is vengeance and Arsetes.

*Arta.* What do I hear! now, cruel Lycomedes,

Now, Cleonice, glut your rage,---yet know

Arsetes lives, and lives in my Pharnaces,

Or this dread moment seals perhaps his doom,

And ends a wretched parent! --- [*Ex. Art. and Bar.*

*Cleo.* Does he live,

Live in Pharnaces! O, mysterious Heaven!

Should it be thus, how has my ruthless hatred

Pursued the man whom most I lov'd---the man

(Madness is in the thought) who now may breathe  
His last.---

*Lyc.* Forbid it, virtue!---Gods! I feel

A secret impulse here---it must not be---

For me he oft has triumph'd---spite of age

And impotence of strength, yet will I face

This last, this fatal scene---my Cleonice,

Thy courage will pursue thy father's steps;

G

Come, let us prove the worst of fortune's malice,  
Then close our eyes in peace, and rest for ever! [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

*A Grove of palm trees, with the Temple of Mars discovered at a distance. [Clashing of swords.]*

*Enter ORONTES retreating before PHARNACES; a Party of Orontes driven off by the Soldiers of Pharnaces.*

*Phar.* Enough, my friends, enough—this life demands  
My sword alone—for thee, whose murderous guile  
With seeming manhood, drew me from the fight  
To fall by numbers, from this arm receive  
Thy treason's due reward.

*Oro.* Fortune at length  
Deceives my aim;—but be it so—~~I~~ scorn  
To deprecate thy vengeance—well thou know'st  
Orontes now—Zopyrus has confess'd,  
Pale, trembling dastard! sinking by thy arm,  
Our first device against the feign'd Arsaces—  
This last is mine—though interest and ambition  
Forbid me now to risk an equal combat,  
Yet since thy hated genius still prevails,—  
Hence every vain disguise—as man to man,  
I dare thy worst.

*Phar.* Behold, thou double traitor!  
The grove and temple where Araxes fell:  
Where now thy followers lurk'd in fatal ambush  
To ensnare Pharnaces—tremble now, while justice  
Here lifts the sword on this devoted spot,

Here claims a sacrifice to every virtue,

Faith, friendship, loyalty, and poor Araxes! [*Fight.*

*Arta.* [*Within.*] Defend, defend my son! [*Oron, falls.*

*Phar.* There sink for ever,

Nor leave thy equal here to curse mankind!

*Enter ARTABASUS and AGENOR.*

*Arta.* Art thou then safe?---my son! my son!

*Phar.* My father!

*Enter LYCOMEDES, CLEONICE, and TERAMENES.*

*Cleo.* [*Entering.*] Death has been busy---sure the  
battle's tumult

Rag'd here but now---

*Phar.* [*Turning.*] 'T is Cleonice's voice!

*Lyc.* He lives indeed! 't is he!--the guardian genius  
That watch'd Bithynia's safety---

*Cleo.* Heavenly Powers!

And yet it cannot---speak,---O speak, my father,

Ere this lov'd phantom---

*Phar.* Still Arsetes lives;

Behold him here;---[*Kneels.*]---No more unknown,  
who now

Assert the lineal honours that await

A kingdom's heir and Artabasus' son.

*Cleo.* Pharnaces rise,---sure 't is allusion all!

What then was he, whose pale and lifeless corse---

*Arta.* The youth, whom late you mourn'd for slain  
Arsetes,

Was in his steal deputed for the fight.

*Phar.* Orontes and Zopyrus have confess'd

The snare in which this hapless victim fell;

Gij

Orontes drew me now, by fraudulent ambush,  
To perish here---behold where lies the traitor;  
His guilty life fast ebbing with his blood.

*Lyc.* Orontes!--where! then where is virtue, gods!  
Now only living with Bithynia's foes!  
Why, Artabasis, did Polemon fall!  
Or fall by thee!-----

*Oro.* [*Raising himself.*] Hear, most unhappy father;  
Thou seek'st t' avenge Polemon's death,---behold  
Him now reveng'd!--lo! here his murderer lies!

*Arta.* The youth that fell by me!

*Oro.* By thee he fell,  
But fell unwounded---to his tent convey'd  
Senseless awhile, he lay---myself alone  
Watch'd his returning life---at that fell moment,  
Ambition, powerful fiend! held forth to view  
Bithynia's crown---my sacrilegious hand  
Uplifted then, with murderous weapon struck  
My prince's life.

*Lyc.* What do I hear!--my blood  
Is chill'd!--pernicious villain!--take the vengeance  
A father's fury---[*Dravus, is held by Arta. and Tera.*

*Clea.* Gracious Heaven!--my brother!-----

*Tera.* Yet hold---though great your woes---the  
guilty wretch

Already gasps in death, and shivering stands  
On that dread brink, where vast eternity  
Unfolds her infinite abyss.-----

*Lyc.* Polemon!

My murder'd boy!

*Oro.* O thou bright sun! whose beams



Now set in blood, dost thou not haste to veil  
 Thy head in night, while Nature, through her works  
 Shrinks from a wretch like me!—Come, deepest darkness,  
 Hide, hide me from myself!—hence, bleeding phantom,  
 Why dost thou haunt me still!—another!—hence!  
 They drive me to the precipice—I sink—

—O, Lycomedes!— [Dies.

*Lyc.* Lo! where lies the serpent  
 That late I nourish'd in my breast, to sting  
 My unsuspecting heart—

*Aria.* A father's nature  
 Feels for thy dreadful trial—Lycomedes,  
 Receive this pledge of friendship—still be thine.  
 Bithynia's crown, nor claim I aught from conquest  
 But mutual peace—some other time shall tell  
 This work of fate—But who shall search the ways  
 Of Heaven inscrutable, or dare to question  
 Why the same power beheld Polemon fall,  
 And sav'd Pharnaces for a father's love?  
 'T is ours with humble praise to take from Jove  
 The cordial draught of joy, not murmur when  
 He deals the cup of woe.

*Lyc.* O, Artabasis!  
 No longer now my foe—this honour'd hand,  
 This hand now free from my Polemon's death,  
 Confirm the brother's union—balmy peace  
 Rest with his manes, and remembrance ever  
 With odorous praise surround his laurell'd tomb!  
 But yet I have a son—in thee he lives,  
 Lives in Pharnaces—[Embrace.]—Yes, my more  
 than brother,

Our friendship knit shall plant the welcome olives

Through both our lands, and bless their sons with peace!

*Phar.* It must, it must—some genius whispers now  
Oblivion to my cares, and bright-wing'd Hope,  
Like Cleonice, points my soul to bliss!

*Lyc.* If bliss be Cleonice, she is your's  
Once more, my son——

*Arta.* My daughter——every God

Propitious smile to crown your virtuous love!

*Phar.* Speak, Cleonice! does thy heart refuse  
To own the mighty rapture?

*Cleo.* O, Pharnaces!

Think how my bosom throbs with various tumult  
Of mingled joy and grief——My brother's fate  
Still labours here, 'spite of the bliss that fills  
My conscious heart; for bliss it is to avow  
My boundless passion——wife of my Pharnaces,  
Or rather that dear name which first subdu'd  
My virgin heart——my ever lov'd Arctes!

*Lyc.* To thee, my son Pharnaces, I resign  
Bithynia's crown, while I, retir'd in ease,  
Steal gently down the peaceful vale of life.

*Arta.* Behold the latent treason brought to light!

Though hid from mortal eye, the Eternal Mind  
Pervades the deepest gloom——Confess, my brother,  
The dazzling meteor that misled thy youth,  
And even seduc'd thy age: the monarch fir'd  
With false ambition for a conqueror's name,  
Is but the lash of Jove to scourge mankind.  
For thee, my son, by Lycomedes rais'd  
To guide, with early hand, the reins of empire,

Remember what the duty of a king  
Exacts, while each domestic bliss shall crown  
Thy private hours, to watch thy people's weal,  
And share, like Heaven, thy happiness with all.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

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EPIMLOQUE.

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Spoken by *Mrs. BULKLEY.*

OUR author, all submission, sends me here,  
To make excuses for your simple cheer;  
And I, that have no interest in his scenes,  
Must bear the train of tragic kings and queens.  
Shall I support the weakness of his Muse?—  
Egad—if so—I'll fit him with abuse—  
I'll soon dissect his fine-spun work, and show  
That all his plot has more of farce than woe.

For, after all, the creature's much deceiv'd,  
If e'er he thinks his tale can be believ'd.  
So tame and so inanimate his maid is—  
How very different from our modern ladies!—  
What, could a blooming lass with ripen'd charms,  
Be held so long from her admirer's arms?—  
If such were truths in prudish beathen climes,  
Examples vary in our later times—  
Then for theatric play—how poor! how cold!  
A heroine's language should be nobly bold,  
Outstrip the decency of vulgar life,  
Mouth at the heavens, and set the gods at strife:—

Time was indeed, an antiquated bard  
 Paid to a beldame, nature, some regard,  
 And drew his females with such simple features,  
 That all, who saw, believ'd them human creatures.

Plain Desdemona bore no trace of art,  
 And Portia play'd a wife's domestic part;  
 While Constance shew'd, but what before we knew,  
 And only griev'd, as real mothers do.—

Shall this stale poet give the drama law,  
 Who poorly copied only what he saw?

Nay, stole from life, in every clime and age,  
 The characters that fill his boasted page!—

Well! as I live, 't is he!—(looking out)—O, are you  
 come?

Does all go well?—poor devil!—seal his doom.

This live-long night he watches every eye,

Talks, like his heroes, in soliloquy—

Then starts aside—What! something goes amiss?—

' Sure 't is the distant murmur of a hiss!—

Alas! kind soul!—I pity his condition,

And will in his behalf this house petition;—

To you, good folks above, for ever ready

To serve a friend, all English hearts and steady;

To you, ye men of candour, sense, and wit,

Who fill the circle of this awful pit;

To you, ye ladies, ever prone to spare

The bard, who love and beauty makes his care;

I here commend him—take him to your favour,

And I'll be surety for his good behaviour.



